



Universal Limited  
Art Editions

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Johnson County Community College • Gallery of Art

## Universal Limited Art Editions

Tatyana Grosman, her husband Maurice and their enterprise, Universal Limited Art Editions, have been credited by historians with reviving printmaking in the mid-20th century and elevating it from what was commonly considered a lower art form to the highest level of aesthetic pursuit.

The reasons for this are various and complex, but three interdependent facts are clear. Tatyana Grosman was an inspired visionary who, at a time of

intense artistic activity and growth in New York in the 1950s and 1960s, was able to discern and attract the best young artists and encourage them to explore the medium that she loved.

Second, the artists she attracted were at the height of their creative powers, and printmaking became a natural outlet for their robust experiments and passionate involvement with a previously unexplored source of expression. And finally, the printers who worked with the artists – Zigmunds Priede, Bill Goldston, Donn Steward, Keith Brintzenhofe and Robert Blackburn among them – were masters in their own right and willingly accepted

the challenges of these rich explorations and complicated technical inventions, many times experimenting with and developing new techniques on their own.

These factors came together at a critical juncture. Each element was inextricably relevant to all other elements – an inspired catalyst, ingenious, inexhaustible innovators and technical wizards. These components merged in a small house in West Islip, N.Y., to create a charged atmosphere so potent as to produce some of the most important graphic work of our time.

The history of Universal Limited Art Editions, due to its pre-eminent position in the modern art narrative, has been extensively chronicled over the last 30 years. It began as a modest enterprise in the Grosman's fifth floor walk-up on Eighth Street in Manhattan. Maurice, an artist unable to support himself on his own work, began making silk screen reproductions of works in private collections and galleries. By 1957, the couple had moved to their cabin in West Islip and begun printing images from original works of art loaned by friends. Unable to garner much interest in these early reproductive efforts, Tatyana came to realize that the prints themselves must be original works. At this time, by happenstance, the Grosmans found two lithographic stones buried in their front yard and subsequently purchased a litho press from a neighbor for \$15.

These circumstances set Tatyana's new course. Her great love of books led her to the idea that contemporary American artists and poets could work together to produce great artistic and literary collaborations. The first artist she approached to explore this idea was Larry Rivers, whom she met on a transatlantic trip in 1950. The poet she selected was Frank O'Hara, who coincidentally lived above Rivers in Manhattan. They agreed to work together and two years later, in 1960, their 12-page book, *Stones*, was completed.

It wasn't long before artists and poets began suggesting others who might work at ULAE, and Maurice is credited with early guidance in the selection process. The formative years brought them Larry Rivers, Frank O'Hara, Max Weber, Mary Callery, Sam Francis and Fritz Garner. The 1960s saw Lee Bontecou, Robert Rauschenberg, Jasper Johns,



Robert Rauschenberg, *Bellini #4*, 1988, 7-color intaglio, 60" x 38 1/2", edition of 47



Jasper Johns, *The Seasons*, 1989, intaglio, 26 3/4" x 54 1/4", edition of 44

Grace Hartigan, Robert Motherwell, Helen Frankenthaler, Barnett Newman, Claes Oldenburg, Jim Dine, Marisol, Terry Southern, Robert Goodnough, James Rosenquist, Cy Twombly, Tony Towle and Edwin Schlossberg. The 1970s brought Alain Robbe-Grillet, Buckminster Fuller, Alexander Lieberman, Saul Steinberg and Andrei Voznesensky.

Tatyana established the ambience and order of the workshop early on. Believing that the human spirit was tangible and real, she created an atmosphere in the studio in which this philosophy pervaded. She felt that printmaking, and particularly lithography, could become a high art form in the hands of great artists working directly on the stones and plates. The close collaboration between master printer and master artist opened up possibilities never before imagined. By allowing only one artist at a time to work in the studio, a highly supportive, creative environment was provided. The whims and wants of the artist were paramount and absolute. Any time of the day or night they wanted to work, the crew was there. Anything they wanted was provided at any time. Only the very best materials, at whatever the expense, were to be used in the production of the work. This fact alone accounted for numerous delays in the production of some works, sometimes for many months, until just the right materials could be produced or located.

Many of these artists still work with ULAE. Four of the most renowned are represented in this exhibition with selections of their most recent works, several

of which are already in major museum collections: Jasper Johns' *Seasons* series, Robert Rauschenberg's *Soviet/American Array* series and *Bellini* series, Larry Rivers' *Bald Eagle George and Part of the Constitution* and James Rosenquist's *Electrical Nymphs on a Non-Objective Ground*, *Night Transitions* and *The Persistence of Electrons in Space*.

The last decade brought in such accomplished artists as Terry Winters, who is represented in this exhibition with five prints: *Novalis*, *Station* and three from his *Morula* series, as well as a beautiful portfolio of 14 etchings. Susan Rothenberg is represented with four prints: *Four Green Lines*, *Black Water*, *Stumblebum* and *Between the Lines*. Elizabeth Murray is represented with *Blue Body*, *Up Dog*, *Down Dog* and her *Quartet* series. Bill Jensen is represented with *Vanquished*, *Babylon*, *Exit* and *Lie-Light*. Carroll Dunham is represented with *Full Spectrum*, *Accelerator* and a group of five prints entitled *Red Shift*. Kiki Smith and Julian Lethbridge are represented by one untitled print each.

These artists carry on the ULAE tradition of creative innovation and technical complexity. Each artist works alone, hand-in-hand with at least one master printer. All the time and resources necessary to complete a print are made available, in some cases extending over a period of two or three years, or as scheduling will allow. Carroll Dunham's *Full Spectrum*, a 14-color lithograph/serigraph, was accomplished by three printers over two years through seven printings of six stones and one aluminum plate and 10 printings from seven silk

screens. Kiki Smith's two-color lithograph, *Untitled*, was accomplished through 10 separate printings by one printer, while Elizabeth Murray's nine-color lithograph, *Down Dog*, took 16 printings by three printers from 14 aluminum plates and two aluminum plate collages. The paper for this work was hand-torn into 12 pieces, corresponding in shape to the plate collages and attached with Japanese rice paper on the back.

Master printer Bill Goldston has been the guiding hand at ULAE for more than a decade. His many accomplishments include perfecting a technique to photosensitize stones for Robert Rauschenberg's work, and modifying an offset lithography press into a hand-fed fine art press that Jasper Johns used throughout the 1970s and 1980s. He was introduced to the Grosmans in 1969 by his professor at the University of Minnesota and a regular ULAE printer, Zigmunds Priede. Much of what was produced at ULAE in subsequent years was made possible by technical experiments on the presses by Priede and Goldston in the early 1970s.

Tatyana Grosman became ill shortly after Maurice died suddenly in 1976. She remained ill until she died in 1982, to the sadness and dismay of the art world. Countless memorial exhibitions were held around the world to honor the many accomplishments of this eloquent, inspired couple, who from humble beginnings achieved magnificent, influential careers.

*Terry Karson, Curator/Registrar  
Yellowstone Art Center*

## Acknowledgment

We would like to thank the Yellowstone Art Center, Billings, Mont., for organizing this outstanding exhibition. In addition, we are most grateful to Terry Karson, curator of the Yellowstone Art Center, and Bill Goldston, director of Universal Limited Art Editions, for curating the show.

Special thanks are also due Mr. Karson for his insightful essay on ULAE.

*Bruce Hartman, director  
Gallery of Art*

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## Exhibition checklist

### **Carroll Dunham**

*Full Spectrum*, 1985-87

14-color lithograph/serigraph, 42" x 28".

Edition of 68 with 15 artist's proofs and 3 printer's proofs.

*Accelerator*, 1985

4-color lithograph, 42" x 29 3/4". Edition of 51 with 8 artist's proofs and 1 printer's proof.

*Red Shift*, 1987-88

5 color lithographs (*Red, Blue, Purple, Green, Black*) and folder, 30" x 22 1/2" each. Edition of 49 with 10 artist's proofs and 2 printer's proofs.

### **Bill Jensen**

*Vanquished*, 1988-89

5-color intaglio, 22 1/2" x 17 3/4". Edition of 53 with 10 artist's proofs and 3 printer's proofs.

*Babylon*, 1985-88

6-color intaglio, 20" x 15". Edition of 50 with 8 artist's proofs and 2 printer's proofs.

*Exit*, 1984-89

4-color intaglio, 13 1/2" x 16 3/4". Edition of 48 with 6 artist's proofs and 3 printer's proofs.

*Lie-Light*, 1989-90

7-color intaglio, 18 1/4" x 23". Edition of 55 with 10 artist's proofs and 3 printer's proofs.

### **Susan Rothenberg**

*Four Green Lines*, 1984

3-color lithograph, 30 1/2" x 35". Edition of 30 with 5 artist's proofs and 2 printer's proofs.

*Black Water*, 1984-85

2-color lithograph, 59" x 39 1/3". Edition of 16 with 6 artist's proofs and 2 printer's proofs.

*Stumblebum*, 1985-86

12-color lithograph, 86 1/2" x 42 1/2". Edition of 40 with 8 artist's proofs and 2 printer's proofs.

*Between the Eyes*, 1983-84

4-color graphic, 57 1/2" x 34". Edition of 36 with 6 artist's proofs and 2 printer's proofs.

### **Kiki Smith**

*Untitled*, 1990

2-color lithograph, 36" x 36". Edition of 44 with 11 artist's proofs and 1 printer's proof.

### **Larry Rivers**

*Bald Eagle George and Part of the Constitution*, 1987

14-color lithograph, 32" x 24". Edition of 52 with 10 artist's proofs, 2 printer's proofs and 9 hors commerce prints.

### **Jasper Johns**

*Spring*, 1987

13-color intaglio, 26" x 19". Edition of 73 with 16 artist's proofs and 4 printer's proofs.

*Summer*, 1987

11-color intaglio, 26" x 19". Edition of 73 with 14 artist's proofs and 4 printer's proofs.

*Fall*, 1987

8-color intaglio, 26" x 19". Edition of 73 with 14 artist's proofs and 4 printer's proofs.

*Winter*, 1987

8-color intaglio, 26" x 19". Edition of 73 with 13 artist's proofs and 4 printer's proofs.

*The Seasons*, 1989

Intaglio, 26 3/4" x 54 1/4". Edition of 44 with 12 artist's proofs and 4 printer's proofs.

*Summer*, 1985-89

Etching and aquatint, 22 5/8" x 15 1/8". Edition of 16 hors commerce.

### **Julian Lethbridge**

*Untitled*, 1990

Lithograph, 22 3/4" x 17". Edition of 58 with 10 artist's proofs and 3 printer's proofs.

### **Terry Winters**

*Station*, 1988

Intaglio, 24 1/4" x 19 1/2". Edition of 55 with 7 artist's proofs and 2 printer's proofs.

*Morula I*, 1983-84

2-color lithograph, 41 3/4" x 31 5/8". Edition of 38 with 5 artist's proofs and 3 printer's proofs.

*Morula II*, 1983-84

3-color lithograph, 42 1/4" x 32 1/2". Edition of 37 with 6 artist's proofs and 3 printer's proofs.

*Morula III*, 1983-84

3-color lithograph, 42" x 32 1/2". Edition of 36 with 5 artist's proofs and 3 printer's proofs.

*Novalis*, 1983-89

Color etching, 42 1/2" x 31". Edition of 50 with 10 artist's proofs and 3 printer's proofs.

*Fourteen Etchings*, 1989

Portfolio of 14 etchings/collages with colophon and interleaving enclosed in paper folder and contained in a basswood box, 18 5/8" x 14 1/8" each. Edition of 65 with 8 artist's proofs and 3 printer's proofs.

### **Elizabeth Murray**

*Blue Body*, 1986-87

11-color lithograph, 47 3/4" x 31 5/8". Edition of 70 with 12 artist's proofs and 2 printer's proofs.

*Up Dog*, 1987-88

11-color lithograph, 45 1/2" x 46 1/2". Edition of 62 with 7 artist's proofs and 3 printer's proofs.

*Down Dog*, 1988

9-color lithograph, 50 3/4" x 41". Edition of 65 with 12 artist's proofs and 3 printer's proofs.

*Chair*, 1989-90

5-color etching, 18" x 14". Edition of 59 with 8 artist's proofs and 3 printer's proofs.

*Shoes*, 1989-90

7-color etching, 18" x 14". Edition of 59 with 8 artist's proofs and 3 printer's proofs.

*Bird*, 1989-90

6-color etching, 18" x 14". Edition of 59 with 9 artist's proofs and 3 printer's proofs.

?, 1989-90

6-color etching, 18" x 14". Edition of 59 with 11 artist's proofs and 3 printer's proofs.

### **Robert Rauschenberg**

*Soviet/American Array I*, 1988-89

14-color intaglio and collage, 53 1/2" x 88 1/2". Edition of 55 with 11 artist's proofs and 6 printer's proofs.

*Soviet/American Array II*, 1988-90

14-color intaglio and collage, 87 3/4" x 52 1/4". Edition of 55 with 11 artist's proofs and 5 printer's proofs.

*Bellini #4*, 1988

7-color intaglio, 60" x 38 1/2". Edition of 47 with 5 artist's proofs, 4 printer's proofs and 12 hors commerce prints.

*Bellini #5*, 1989

14-color intaglio, 59" x 38 1/4". Edition of 50 with 9 artist's proofs and 5 printer's proofs.

### **James Rosenquist**

*Electrical Nymphs on a Non-Objective Ground*, 1984

14-color lithograph, 42" x 42". Edition of 30 with 10 artist's proofs and 5 printer's proofs.

*Night Transitions*, 1985

12-color lithograph, 53" x 34 1/2". Edition of 35 with 7 artist's proofs and 4 printer's proofs.

*The Persistence of Electrons in Space*, 1987

10-color etching, 40" x 36 5/8". Edition of 48 with 8 artist's proofs and 4 printer's proofs.

Johnson County Community College  
Cultural Education Center  
12345 College at Quivira  
Overland Park, KS 66210-1299  
(913) 469-8500